

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 227273

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (NIMETZ, MATTHEW)

SUBJECT: STAFF NOTES THREE: MID EAST

FOR COUNSELOR MATTHEW NIMETZ ONLY

1. MR. CHRISTOPHER SAYS QUOTE THE LID IS ON UNQUOTE.
2. JODY POWELL GAVE A PRESS BRIEFING ON WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY AT CAMP DAVID. THERE WAS LITERALLY NOTHING REPEAT NOTHING HE SAID ON WEDNESDAY THAT WOULD BE OF USE TO YOU. THURSDAY'S WAS ONLY marginally more useful. POWELL SAID IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS:

-- "I CERTAINLY WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED TO SEE THE TALKS GO
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PAGE 02 STATE 227273

INTO AND THROUGH THE WEEKEND. I DON'T HAVE ANY DEFINITE
INFORMATION ONE WAY OR THE OTHER ABOUT IT."

-- CARTER, SADAT AND BEGIN MET WITHOUT ADVISORS THURSDAY
MORNING.

-- "THE QUESTION WAS WHAT ABOUT AMERICAN TROOPS IN THE

MIDDLE EAST. THAT IS ONE OF THE GREAT NON-EXISTENT STORIES OF ALL TIME THAT RAN AND RUMBLLED AND RICOCHETTED AROUND THE WORLD FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS BASED ON ENTIRELY NOTHING EXCEPT, I UNDERSTAND, A CHANCE COMMENT MADE BY WAY OF EXAMPLE IN FRONT OF SOME AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN AND BY THE TIME IT CAME FULL CIRCLE . . .

I BELIEVE YOUR QUESTION WAS A GENERAL QUESTION WITH REGARD TO AMERICAN PRESENCE, AMERICAN ROLE. SO I AM NOT GOING TO BEG IT FOR YOU, BUT ALL THESE REPORTS ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERING AN AMERICAN AIR FORCE BASE ON THE WEST BANK WERE HOGWASH AND THERE WAS NOTHING TO THEM THEN, THERE IS NOTHING TO THEM NOW. '

-- "NEITHER I NOR ANYONE ELSE EXCEPT FOR THE PRESIDENT OF EGYPT AND THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL HAS FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF THESE DISCUSSIONS. BUT I THINK WE INDICATED AT THE OUTSET THAT OUR PRIMARY HOPE HERE AS FAR AS THE UNITED STATES IS CONCERNED WAS TO LISTEN TO THE THOUGHTS OF THE OTHER PARTIES AND WHEN IT SEEMED APPROPRIATE, OR IT MIGHT BE CONSTRUCTIVE, TO TRY TO HELP THEM EMBARK UPON A SUBSTANTIVE DIALOGUE. I WILL JUST REFER YOU BACK TO THOSE COMMENTS BEFORE, THAT I DON'T KNOW HOW I CAN GO BEYOND THAT.

I AM SURE HE IS SPENDING A GOOD PORTION OF HIS TIME LISTEN-
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 227273

ING, BUT I AM SURE HE IS CONTRIBUTING AND DISCUSSING, TOO. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO PLACE ALL OF THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INFORMAL AND RELAXED NATURE OF THESE CONVERSATIONS. WHEN THE PLANS WERE MADE YESTERDAY FOR THE TRIPARTITE MEETING TODAY AND PRESIDENT CARTER, PRESIDENT SADAT, AND PRIME MINISTER BEGIN WERE DISCUSSING THE PLANS AND THE TIMING FOR THE MEETING TODAY, ONE POINT THAT WAS MADE BY BOTH PRESIDENT SADAT AND PRIME MINISTER BEGIN WAS THAT THEY SHOULD ALL LEAVE THEIR WRISTWATCHES AT HOME AND THAT THERE BE NO TIME PRESSURE ON THEM."

-- "WE DID HOPE THAT THERE WOULD NOT BE DAILY OR MAYBE TWICE DAILY COMMENTING ABOUT THE SUBSTANCE, AND THUS RUNNING THE RISK, EVEN PERHAPS UNINTENTIONALLY, OF INJECTING ANOTHER PROBLEM INTO THE DISCUSSION, AND THAT THE DESIRE FOR ONE OR ALL OF THE THREE PARTIES TO 'LOOK GOOD BACK HOME' AND WORRY ABOUT WHETHER WHAT THEY SAID THIS AFTERNOON WAS GOING TO HAVE TO BE JUST IN A TENTATIVE WAY DEALT WITH IN A PUBLIC WAY FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS.

SO, AS I SAY, YES, WE ARE TRYING TO CONDUCT -- AND SO FAR, WITH A REASONABLE DEGREE OF SUCCESS -- THESE DISCUSSIONS

FOR A FEW DAYS PRIVATELY, QUIETLY, INFORMALLY IN THE
HOPE THAT THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO A PRODUCTIVE OUTCOME."
CHRISTOPHER

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